REVIEW AND EVALUATION BULLETINS

Volume 4, Number 4
1983

Colloquium on French as a Second Language:
Proceedings

Ministry of Education
Ministry of Colleges and Universities
Ontario

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Merrill Swain
Sharon Lapkin
Michael Canale
Frances Morrison
Ronald Trites
Françoise Howard
Pierre Calvé

Barbara Kerr, Editor

The research reported in these proceedings was funded under contract by the Ministry of Education, Ontario. The proceedings reflect the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the Ministry.

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Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

Colloquium on French as a Second Language (1983 : Toronto)
Colloquium on French as a Second Language

(Review and evaluation bulletins, ISSN 0226-7306 ; v. 4, no. 4)
Bibliography: p.
ISBN 0-7743-8652-5

1. French language--Study and teaching--Non-French speaking students--Congresses. 2. French language--Study and teaching--Ontario--Congresses. I. Swain, Merrill, 1944- II. Kerr, Barbara. III. Ontario. Ministry of Education. IV. Title. V. Series.

PC2068.C3C6 1983 448'.007'0713 83-093043-4

ON03010

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Introduction

On March 2, 1983, the Research Branch of the Ministry of Education, Ontario, held its second colloquium on research projects in the area of French as a second language in Ontario. The principal investigators of four different research teams were invited to present reports at the colloquium. Dr. Merrill Swain and Dr. Sharon Lapkin of OISE's Modern Language Centre presented findings from their study Bilingual Education in Ontario: A Decade of Research. Dr. Michael Canale of OISE's Franco-Ontarian Centre discussed the purposes and theoretical framework development of the Ontario Assessment Instrument Pool for French as a Second Language Project, as well as the material in Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing. Dr. Frances Morrison of the Ottawa Board of Education Research Centre discussed French proficiency and general progress among students in early-entry and late-entry immersion programs over a period of years. Dr. Ronald L. Trites of the University of Ottawa gave a detailed account of research with children who have learning disabilities in Primary French-immersion programs and the development of tests to predict success in immersion programs.

Two guest analysts/reactors were invited to comment on the research presented and the issues raised: Professor Françoise Howard of McArthur College, Queen's University, and Dr. Pierre Calvé of the University of Ottawa. The participants in the colloquium included those in all phases and levels of education across Ontario.

Barbara Kerr,
Editor

Bilingual Education in Ontario: A Decade of Research

Merrill Swain and Sharon Lapkin

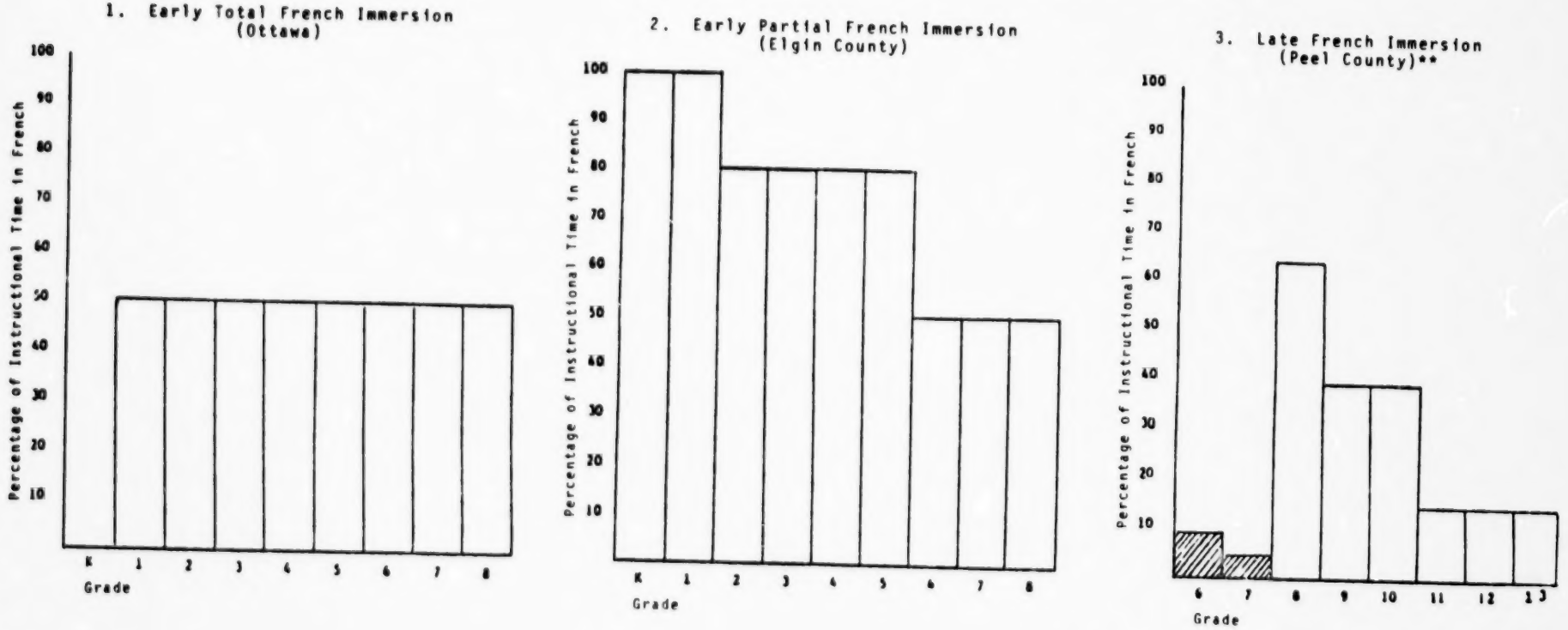
French-immersion education has been the subject of numerous research studies in Ontario since 1969, when immersion programs were first introduced in publicly supported schools in the province. With more than 28 000 students, or 2.5 per cent of the English-speaking student population (K-8), enrolled in immersion programs in Ontario at the elementary level (1979-80 figures), it seems clear that immersion is here to stay; and indeed the enrolment trends suggest that the demand for such programs will continue to increase. Information from the immersion research studies has been in high demand by parents and educators faced with decisions about immersion education for their children and their schools.

To provide an overview and synthesis of the research on immersion education in Ontario, the Ontario Ministry of Education awarded a contract to the OISE Modern Language Centre. The immersion-programs studies by the Modern Language Centre team over the years include three major alternatives: the early-total-French-immersion programs of the Carleton, Ottawa, and Toronto boards of education; the early-partial-French-immersion program of the Elgin County Board of Education; and the late-partial-French-immersion program of the Peel County Board of Education. These three variations, depicted in figure 1, are representative of immersion programs found across Ontario and the other Canadian provinces in that they share the following characteristics:

- The programs, which are optional, serve a primarily English-speaking school population.

- In the initial year(s) of the program, from one-half to an entire school day is devoted to instruction in French -- French is the medium of instruction, rather than a separate school subject.

Figure 1: Percentages of Instructional Time in French: Three Immersion Examples*



* All percentages are approximate and have been rounded to the nearest 5 per cent. Percentages of instructional time are calculated on the basis of a 270-minute school day at Grades 1 to 6 and a 300-minute day at Grades 7 to 13.

** Only one variant of the program is illustrated. The shaded bars represent the core French background of the students prior to their entering late immersion at Grade 8.

- Students in immersion programs study the same curriculum content as their peers in the regular English program.

Four major questions have been addressed in the annual evaluations of these programs:

1. What happens to the development of students' first-language (English) skills? When French is used as the major vehicle of communication and instruction in the classroom, it is not surprising that concern about the normal development of first-language skills would be expressed, especially with respect to those skills associated with school achievement, such as reading, spelling, and other aspects of written expression. For this reason the English-language skills of immersion students, and especially of those in early-immersion programs who would otherwise normally be learning to read and write in English, have been carefully monitored as the students progress through school.

2. Do the immersion students learn more French than students in a core French program? How does their French compare with that of native speakers of French? Immersion programs were initiated in the belief that a more intensive exposure to French than was available in the core French program, as well as use of the second language as a vehicle of communication, would lead to higher levels of second-language proficiency. The development of the second-language skills of the immersion students has accordingly been carefully examined. In spite of the conviction that immersion education would lead to higher levels of proficiency in French than would traditional programs of French as a second language, there was a major question as to how much French would be learned by immersion students as a result of their being expected to function in French in their daily classroom activities with a minimum of formal language instruction.

3. Are the immersion students taught in French able to keep up with their English-educated peers in subject content? One of the major concerns expressed by parents and educators about immersion programs was that, because subjects such as mathematics and

science would be taught in French, the students would not learn as much as if they were taught in their first language, English. Although parents wanted their children to learn French, they did not want it at the expense of their children's academic achievement. The concern was not limited to whether the students would learn as much as their English-educated peers, but extended also to whether, having acquired the knowledge through French, they would be able to transfer that knowledge for use in English contexts. Thus, it was not enough to test the immersion students' achievement in, for example, mathematics and science by using tests written in the language of instruction (French). Rather, the tests of subject achievement were usually given in English, even though the language of instruction for that subject was French.

4. Does participation in the immersion program hinder general intellectual or cognitive growth? There still remains a belief among the general public that learning two languages leads to cognitive confusion, slowing down cognitive and intellectual development. Indeed, many research findings up to the 1960s suggested that bilingual children obtained lower IQ scores than unilingual children. This research has been subjected to serious criticism, and many of the conclusions have been repudiated by the results of recent, better designed research (see Swain and Cummins 1979, for a review). Because of this general concern, however, the general intellectual growth of immersion students has been monitored, largely through the use of standardized IQ tests.

Research Design

For each of the immersion programs evaluated, several successive groups of immersion students entering the program were followed over an eight- to nine-year period. A corresponding set of comparison classes comprising students of similar socio-economic background and IQ from the regular English program was also tested.

Results

The linguistic outcomes (for both English- and French-language skills) can be summarized as follows:

1. In the area of English-language skills, immersion students in all three programs exhibit temporary lags relative to the performance of regular English-program groups. In early-total and early-partial-immersion, the immersion students' weaker performance lasts until about the end of Grade 3, whereas for late immersion the lag is shorter or, in some cases, does not occur at all. The overall trend in subsequent grades is for immersion students to perform as well as or, in the case of early-total-immersion students, better than their English-educated counterparts.

2. As far as French skills are concerned, early-total-immersion students attain, by Grade 6, near native proficiency in listening and reading comprehension, and achieve as well as an average class of Francophone students in Montreal on a French achievement test. Their productive skills, speaking and writing, remain non-native-like, although they have no difficulty in conveying what they want to say.

3. Early-partial French immersion produces less dramatic results in French in that it takes longer for students to match the performance of early-total-immersion groups. By Grade 8, however, based on very limited data from one class in Elgin County, the performance of early-partial-immersion students resembles that of Grade 7 early-total-immersion students on French tests given in common.

4. The French skills of late-immersion students appear to remain well below those of Francophone comparison groups, even after several years of immersion. When the performance of Ontario late-immersion students in Grade 8 (after one, two, or three years in the program) is compared with that of early-total-immersion students at the same grade level, the early-immersion groups are well ahead.

5. The perceptions and self-assessments of Grade 8 immersion students' French correspond to the findings summarized in (4) above. Early-total-immersion students consider themselves more skilled in French than late-immersion students and would prefer to spend a greater percentage of their school day studying in French.

6. In the evaluations of the three immersion-program alternatives, comparisons with the French performance of core French students have revealed that the immersion students' performance is almost always significantly better.

7. Final comparisons of the French proficiency of early- and late-immersion students in Ontario must be deferred until the early-immersion groups have reached the end of secondary school. A preliminary consideration of relevant findings from Montreal suggests that the design of each program (for example, intensity of exposure to French at particular levels) is a key factor.

8. The level of French skills attained by students in immersion programs may also be related to the school setting. Thus, the findings from one study suggest that the program in an immersion centre where no regular English program exists produces better results (superior French listening and reading scores, for example) than housing it in a dual-track school.

9. Early-total-immersion students' spoken French is generally assessed favourably by Francophone adults and students. Their patterns of French-language use, however, indicate that they tend not to seek out opportunities for using their second-language skills, but do respond in French when conversation is initiated in French. This pattern appears to hold for both early- and late-immersion students, who differ, however, in terms of their use of French in the classroom with the teacher. In that context, early-immersion students report a significantly greater use of French.

10. The ability to learn to communicate functionally in the second language is not related to intelligence as measured by standardized IQ tests.

11. Immersion education has not had negative effects on the students' general intellectual development, and, in fact, early-total French immersion may lead to its enhancement.

12. In mathematics, science, and social studies, early-total-immersion students generally achieve as well as students studying these subjects in English. Early-partial- and late-immersion students appear occasionally to have some difficulty, relative to their comparison groups, in acquiring mathematical and science skills. The perceived difficulty may be related to limitations experienced because of weaker second-language skills.

13. The work-study skills of early-total-immersion students tend to be superior to those of their English-educated peers. No such trends are noticeable in the results of early-partial-immersion students.

The ministry report (Swain and Lapkin 1981) also includes an overview of the research conducted, mainly outside Ontario, on social and psychological aspects of immersion education. The results indicate that early-immersion students adjust smoothly to their school environment and are more satisfied with their program than are late-immersion students. Most of the studies reviewed concerned early-immersion students. In general, their self-concept is positive; they feel themselves to be English Canadians, but tend to develop less rigid ethnolinguistic stereotypes than their English-educated counterparts. Immersion students favour increased contact with Francophones, a step which is likely to prove beneficial not only for developing more positive attitudes, but also for enhancing French-language skills.

There seems little question that all three immersion programs have proven successful in promoting advanced French-language skills, and that immersion education constitutes a viable form of education in which English-speaking students can become functionally bilingual. For this to occur, it is clear that school boards need to be flexible and creative in organizing their schools. For example, an urban board with a large number of schools, some in close proximity, might establish immersion centres (as the Carleton Board has done), where it is possible to create an optimal environment for the immersion program. It is interesting to note that the Frontenac-Lennox and Addington County

R.C.S.S. Board has housed its bilingual program, which begins at Grade 5, in a Francophone elementary school. In doing so, it has established a needed precedent for crossing the invisible boundary between schools for English-speaking and French-speaking students that often exists within boards.

It is unlikely that our students will become fully bilingual without contact with French-speaking peers. Whatever can be done to encourage this contact -- in French -- will be beneficial to Anglophones and Francophones alike.

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Communicative Approaches to Second-Language Teaching and Testing

Michael Canale

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to the Ministry of Education, Ontario, for its financial support of our research and for inviting me here today to speak about it. I must point out that the research was a group effort, involving perhaps a dozen other individuals.

Our research has centred on determining the feasibility and practicality of measuring the communicative competence of students enrolled in core French-as-a-second-language programs in elementary and secondary schools in Ontario. The initial stage of our research (which culminated in the report Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing -- Canale and Swain 1979) ended about four years ago, and yet many of the problems that we identified then still remain.

In my presentation today I shall talk about the purposes of the Ontario Assessment Instrument Pool for French as a Second Language Project (otherwise known as OAIP/FSL) and elaborate on the development of the theoretical framework for it. I shall conclude with some comments on residual problems in second-language teaching and testing.

OAIP/FSL

The main purpose of OAIP/FSL was to provide an evaluative component for the ministry's guideline document French, Core Programs, 1980. The document's clear focus was on communication skills: "The principal aim of the French program is to develop communication skills in both the receptive and expressive aspects of language. The four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing will be developed gradually and naturally in the program through the interaction of speaker and listener and writer and reader; this is the basis of communication" (p.4).

Working from this emphasis on communication, we began OAIP/FSL in the hope of counteracting the trivialization of communicative skills, that is, the widely held assumption among teachers of French that communicative skills are learned automatically via a grammatically oriented program. Our problem was twofold: how to define communication and how to measure it in the core French program. There was a strong need for a theoretical framework to guide development of the OAIP/FSL items, and we set about to develop one.

Theoretical Framework

For our framework we drew on theories of language, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and other language-related disciplines to give a general background to communicative approaches and to distinguish the notions of communicative competence and communicative performance. We examined theories of communicative competence and the advantages and disadvantages of a communicative approach for general second-language programs.

Developing the theoretical framework entailed identifying the main features of communication, which we proposed as follows:

- Communication is interaction-based, in that communicative skills are normally both acquired and used in social interaction.

- It involves unpredictability and creativity in both form and message.

- It takes place in discourse and sociocultural contexts which provide constraints on appropriate language use and also clues as to correct interpretations of utterances.

- It is carried out under limiting psychological and other conditions such as memory constraints, fatigue, and distractions.

- It always has a purpose (for example, to establish social relations, to persuade, or to promise).

- It involves authentic as opposed to textbook-contrived language.

- It is judged as successful or not on the basis of actual outcomes. (For example, communication could be judged successful in the case of a non-native English speaker who was trying to find the train station in Sudbury, uttered the ungrammatical sentence "How to go train?" to a passer-by, and was given directions to the train station.)

Our next step was to synthesize a view of communicative competence. Our theoretical framework minimally included four areas of knowledge and skill -- grammar, sociolinguistics, discourse, and strategies -- sketched as follows:

- grammatical competence: mastery of the language code (verbal or non-verbal), which involves such features as lexical items and rules of sentence formation, pronunciation, and literal meaning;

- sociolinguistic competence: mastery of appropriate language use in different sociolinguistic contexts, with emphasis on appropriateness of meanings (for example, attitudes, speech acts, and propositions) and appropriateness of forms (for example, register, non-verbal expression, and intonation);

- discourse competence: mastery of the combining and interpreting of forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text in different genres through the use of (a) cohesion devices to relate utterance forms (for example, pronouns, transition words, and parallel structures) and (b) coherence rules to organize meanings (for example, repetition, progression, consistency, and relevance of ideas);

- strategic competence: mastery of verbal and non-verbal strategies (a) to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to insufficient competence or to performance limitations (for example, strategies such as the use of dictionaries, paraphrase, and gestures) and (b) to enhance the effectiveness of communication (for example, deliberately slow and soft speech for rhetorical effect).

After establishing our definitions, we then identified five important principles that must guide the development of a communicative approach for a general second-language program.

- The primary goal of the approach must be to integrate grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences.

- The approach must be based on and respond to the student's communication needs.

- The student must be able to take part in communicative interaction with highly competent speakers of the language.

- Optimal use must be made of those aspects of communicative competence developed by the student with his/her native language that are common to skills required in the second language.

- A curriculum-wide approach must be used to best facilitate second-language competence.

As we detailed in our initial research report, we carefully examined the implications of our theoretical framework for FSL teaching and testing. With respect to syllabus design, we recognized that a second-language syllabus organized on the basis of communicative functions may be disorganized with respect to grammar. However, it is our view that a functionally based communicative approach is more likely to have positive consequences for learner motivation and is less likely to be associated with negative feelings than a grammatically based approach.

With respect to teaching methodology, it is crucial that classroom activities reflect those communication activities that the learner is most likely to engage in, that those communication activities be as meaningful as possible, and that they be characterized by aspects of genuine communication. The role of the teacher in the second-language classroom must undergo a change if a communication-based approach is adopted; in other words, the teacher will have to take on an active role as an instigator of and participant in meaningful communication. To carry out this role effectively, the teacher

will have to have a fairly high level of communicative competence in the second language, a situation that has implications for teacher training.

As well, there are two important general implications of our theoretical framework for testing communication in the second language. First, communicative testing must be devoted not only to what the student knows about the second language and how to use it (competence), but also to what extent the student is able to actually demonstrate this knowledge in a meaningful communicative situation (performance). Second, discrete-point tests will be useful, along with integrative-type tests, as measures of competence, since such tests may be more effective than integrative ones in making the student aware of and in assessing his/her control of the separate components and elements of communicative competence.

We feel that communicative competence must be investigated in a more rigorous manner before a communicative approach can be fully implemented in second-language teaching and testing. We identified the following as being among the more critical areas for further research:

- description of the communicative needs of a given group of second-language students based on factors particular to both the students and the speech community in which the second language is most likely to be used;

- explicit statement of the grammatical, sociocultural, and discourse rules and communicative strategies relevant to students' communicative needs;

- comparative analysis of rules in the sociolinguistic components in the second language and in the student's native language;

- study of the minimum level of communicative skills in the second language needed by teachers if they are to effectively use a communicative approach;

- development of feasible classroom activities to encourage meaningful second-language communication;

- development of test formats and evaluation criteria to balance reliability, validity, and practicality in the assessment of communicative skills.

Research findings in these areas will be very useful in the implementation of a communicative approach.

Concluding Remarks

Three main areas still remain as problems requiring further research efforts.

First, we need to judge the extent to which the objectives we and the ministry proposed are adequate and realistic for core French programs. Are the objectives sufficient for basic communicative skills? How realistic is it to expect teachers and students to address these objectives in view of the limited time allotted to French in core programs?

Second, there is the problem of understanding how communicative skills are acquired. Above all, we need to find ways to assist the learner and co-operate with him/her. The learner is probably better equipped to learn a language through using it than we are equipped, given our poor understanding, to teach it (in the traditional sense of teaching).

Third, how can language programs be improved? There are implementation problems, and guidelines and assessment instruments are not enough. Current textbooks, teacher-training programs, resource materials -- all have to be very carefully evaluated in light of the goals of the ministry guidelines and of OAIP/FSL.

In the final analysis, however, all our work -- both the OAIP/FSL items and the ministry guidelines -- can be no more than suggestions. It is the responsibility of teachers as users to refine and improve on them.

Reference

Canale, Michael, and Merrill Swain. 1979. Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing. Review and Evaluation Bulletins, vol. 1, no. 5. Toronto: Ministry of Education, Ontario.

Ten Years of Immersion in the Ottawa Area

Frances Morrison

Since the first immersion program in St. Lambert some fifteen years ago, such programs have spread across Canada. That pioneer program has been the model for many of the more than 150 immersion programs in Canada. Over half of these programs start in Kindergarten and about another one-fourth in Grade 1; these are generally classified as primary-entry or early French immersion (EFI). Most of the other programs (14 per cent) begin in Grade 6, 7, or 8; these are called late-entry immersion (LFI).

In Ontario many immersion programs began about 1970, most of them based on the St. Lambert model. If immersion programs are defined as those where half or more of the instruction is given in the second language, then more than 28 000 students were enrolled in such programs at the elementary school level (K-8) in Ontario in 1978-79 (Swain and Lapkin 1981).

In the Ottawa-Carleton area a post-immersion program at the secondary level has been established for several years. In 1982-83 several hundred students were enrolled in programs which included courses taken through the medium of the French language, as well as courses in French language and literature.

In Ottawa, where many federal-government employees are in positions that require a certain level of bilingualism, there was strong parental pressure for the introduction of immersion programs in all four of the local school boards. At least one type of immersion program was soon to be found in each board, and the number of students involved increased each year during the 1970s. About a third of the five-year-old Kindergarten students are enrolled in a French-immersion

program in the two public school boards, and a required program of 50 per cent English and 50 per cent French has been in effect for several years in the first five grades of one of the Roman Catholic school boards.

Research in the Ottawa Area

Since the initiation of French-immersion programs in Canada, numerous studies have been carried out by researchers in universities and school systems. The studies carried out by the Ottawa Board Research Centre have tended to be limited to practical rather than theoretical issues.

One of the early concerns was whether or not there was any lag in or detriment to the English-language development or general academic skills of immersion students. The research carried out in Ottawa by OISE and by the research centre replicated the findings of a number of other studies. These have indicated that, although there may be temporary delays in the development of some English-language skills until formal English instruction is introduced, the immersion groups catch up to and, by Grade 4 or 5, perform as well as or even better than their English-program counterparts on various tests of English-language and academic achievement.

Other studies indicate that the immersion groups tend to perform better than the regular English-program groups. In most of the studies correction is made for differences in academic ability, since the immersion students tend to be somewhat more able academically on the average than the total group of English-program students. The current contract of the research centre with the Ministry of Education includes an attempt to explore this matter further at the high school level by comparing the achievement in selected content subjects of students taught in English and in French.

In the earlier years of the research centre's evaluations, various attitude measures were used with students at different grade levels to help determine whether or not the attitudes of immersion students towards Francophones differ from those of non-immersion students. The measures were not sensitive enough to measure differences between the two groups, both of which showed generally positive attitudes, or to

detect changes over time. There was also some negative feedback from parents with respect to the use of these questionnaires, and this particular avenue was not explored further.

In recent years the research centre evaluations have emphasized the French proficiency of students enrolled in both EFI and LFI programs. Many of these have involved Grade 8 through 12 students in both longitudinal and cross-sectional studies.

Immersion Programs in Ottawa and Carleton

An outline of the characteristics of the immersion programs in the Ottawa and Carleton boards of education is given below:

1. Primary-entry programs
   - begin in Kindergarten
   - all instruction in French in Kindergarten and Grade 1
   - about sixty minutes of instruction daily in English, starting in Grade 2
   - gradual increase in English instruction to 50 per cent by Grade 6

2. Late-entry programs
   - Ottawa begins in Grade 6 with 100 per cent French, followed by 50 per cent in Grades 7 and 8.
   - Carleton begins in Grade 7 with 80 per cent French, followed by the same in Grade 8.

3. Secondary-level bilingual programs
   - two to four courses (out of eight) in French each year, in Grades 9 through 12
   - French language and literature at each grade level
   - options available and amount of choice varies with each school

By the end of Grade 10 EFI students in both Ottawa and Carleton have received over 6000 hours of instruction in French. The number of cumulative hours for LFI Grade 10 students is about 2500 in Carleton and 3400 in Ottawa. These Carleton students had taken core French for twenty minutes daily before entry into the immersion program, while the

Ottawa students and later Carleton groups had followed a forty-minute core program. In 1982 the Grade 12 LFI students in Carleton had accumulated about 3000 hours of instruction in French, while the Ottawa students had 3900 hours.

Tests and Testing Conditions

During the ten years of these evaluation studies, many different instruments have been administered to students in immersion programs. The problem of obtaining tests suitable for these students at various levels has been a perennial one; in many cases the choices made through necessity have not been ideal.

Two sources of tests have been those prepared for the International Educational Achievement (IEA) studies of secondary education in various countries and those developed at OISE. Speaking tests have been included as frequently as possible, in spite of the costs involved and the time required to administer them.

In most cases tests have been used with one or more groups for a number of years in order to provide both longitudinal and cross-sectional data, as well as to examine differences between groups. The IEA French tests have been used for these purposes; at least one of these has been administered at some grade levels each year. One of the forms of an OISE cloze-type test, requiring the student to fill in words missing from a text, has also provided a means of making comparisons between groups.

One problem in collecting test data is ensuring that conditions are the same for all classes taking the tests. In most cases, testers specially trained for the task have administered the tests, and arrangements have been made to provide suitable equipment and to set up an appropriate schedule.

Despite these efforts, however, some episodes of lack of equivalence of testing conditions have come to our attention, and there may be others about which we have no knowledge. Some of the difficulties are magnified in the case of listening tests, for which tape recordings are generally used. For example, for one test given in the past year

it was found that, when a certain model of recorder was used at the high volume necessary for large-classroom conditions, there was excessive sound distortion, which had not been apparent beforehand. The results from these schools could not then be compared with those from the schools tested earlier.

Comparisons With Other Groups

Parents and teachers in the Ottawa area have always been much interested in comparing the performance of immersion students with that of Canadian federal civil servants who take a Public Service Commission test intended to classify their level of bilingualism. Before 1982 no students who had taken the tests had been in the EFI stream. In the spring of 1982, however, a group of Grade 10 bilingual-program EFI students in the Ottawa board were tested.

The four skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking were tested. The EFI students and several groups of late-entry students at Grades 10 and 12 achieved, on average, Level B on reading, writing, and listening and the lower Level A for speaking. Level B, the highest level attainable on these particular tests, would be required for most positions demanding bilingual competence, while A would be sufficient for some clerical and technical positions

Over 80 per cent of the students at both grade levels who were tested in 1981 and 1982 reached the B level on the tests of listening and writing, the latter being a test emphasizing grammar and usage. The proportion classified at the B level on reading was about 60 per cent for the EFI students and 70 per cent for a combined Grade 12 LFI group from the two boards. On the speaking test, 38 per cent of the same Grade 10 EFI students and 20 per cent of those in Grade 12 reached the B level.

A group of forty-five students had scores on both the Public Service Reading Test and the Test de français, Secondaire IV, one of a series of tests developed within the Quebec school system to measure reading comprehension and language usage. The correlation of 0.45

between the two sets of scores is significant, but the two tests apparently measure somewhat different skills, since only about 20 per cent of the variance was shared.

It was also interesting to discover how well the various groups of immersion students perform relative to native speakers of the language. To this end, one or more of the levels of the Test de français were administered to bilingual-program students in Grades 8 through 12. The average score of the Grade 8 EFI students was at about the sixtieth percentile and that of the LFI students at about the fortieth percentile, when compared with norms based on the first-year secondary students on whom the test was normed.

Comparisons Between Groups Within the Two Boards

When the equated scores for the EFI and LFI students in the two boards were compared, we found that the EFI students consistently did better at each grade level. In most cases the differences between groups in the two programs in the same board were significant. There was also an increase in the mean score from grade to grade in each of the four groups; in about half of these cases the differences were also significant.

For a sizable group at each grade level tested, scores on the Test de français were available from the end of their Grade 8 year. The increase in scores tended to be greater for LFI students, but the increase in means between Grade 8 and each of Grades 10, 11, and 12 was significant.

Another measure of growth was made possible when the IEA IV French Writing Test was used with students in Grade 8 and again in Grade 10. Each of the groups identified made significant gains during the two-year period. For fifty-eight students in the Carleton Grade 7 entry program, the mean score increased from about twenty-three to twenty-eight between 1978 and 1980; for forty-five students in the Ottawa program, the increase was from twenty to twenty-seven. At the Grade 10 level the difference between students in the two boards was no longer significant.

Although high school results for LFI students have been available for several years, only in the last two or three years has it been possible in Ottawa and Carleton to compare those for EFI and LFI groups and to begin to determine whether or not there is an optimal age to begin an immersion program. However, it should be remembered that, even if the groups appear to be similar in ability, other factors such as motivation may differ.

In 1979 and 1980 all Grade 8 EFI and LFI students in both boards were extensively tested. Various measures of French proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking were used. On nearly all of these measures, the EFI groups had significantly higher scores than the LFI groups ($p < 0.05$), even after adjustment for ability. This was to be expected, since the latter groups had received less than half of the time in French instruction.

In 1981 and 1982 the results for EFI and LFI Grade 10 students were compared. In 1981 the first sizable groups of EFI students had significantly higher scores on five different tests. In 1982 there were fewer significant differences between the two groups, although it is possible that in some cases this was a function of the lack of sensitivity in the scoring procedures used with the communicative tasks and, in the case of the interview test, of the size of the sample as well. There were no significant differences between groups on the same test of French reading and language usage given in 1981. On the writing task, the only significant difference was on the rating for word choice, where the combined EFI group for the two boards had a higher mean rating than the corresponding LFI group. The distributions of errors were found to be very similar for the two program groups, as was the percentage of errors.

Results on two levels of the cloze test (Test de mots à trouver), given at different grade levels in various years, suggest about a two-year difference at the secondary level between LFI groups and the first group of EFI students, but this difference appears to have diminished with the second group of EFI students. Both of the Grade 12 LFI groups have mean scores similar to those of the Grade 10 EFI groups. This two-year difference was also suggested in a comparison of the Grade 8 EFI results of 1979 and 1980 with the Grade 10 LFI scores

of 1980. It is important to note, however, that in each case individual differences among students in any one program far surpassed any overall difference between programs.

Communicative Competence

An effort has been made in the past several years to evaluate the communicative competence of immersion students in both speaking and writing. The writing task given to Grade 10 students in 1982 consisted of a letter in French on a topic thought likely to evoke strong opinions on the part of most students. A rating of from one to five was given as a holistic score for overall impression and for each of five analytic scores (word choice, technical skills, grammatical skills, content and ideas, and organization).

One problem occurred in spite of the training and careful instructions given to the scorer. In all of the groups there were greater proportions of high scores than low ones. However, since the scoring was consistent, it was possible to use the ratings to compare groups, and no significant differences were found between the EFI and LFI groups in the two boards.

A half-hour French interview test, similar to that used by the Foreign Service Institute in the United States, has been used with samples of EFI and LFI students at several grade levels. Although eleven different ratings were possible, only one student was given one of the top three scores, representing native-like speech, and the two lowest ratings were not used.

The verbal descriptions associated with these ratings indicate that the majority of the immersion students tested may be considered orally competent at least to satisfy their routine social needs and limited work needs in French (Level 2 or 2+). Many are also able to speak the language well enough to participate in most ordinary conversations on practical, social, or work-related subjects (Level 3 or 3+).

Over half of the ninety-seven students who had been in either EFI or LFI programs and who were tested at the beginning of Grade 11 in the fall of 1981 were classified at Level 2 or 2+. Another 20 per cent

were placed in the next higher category, while about 20 per cent were judged to be below Level 2. Only five students, all but one from LFI programs, were found to be performing at the very basic Level 1, while 16 were at Level 1+.

Tracing and Other Studies

Another important aspect of the Ottawa research has been the ongoing tracing of certain cohorts of students throughout their school careers. This has made it possible to compare program choices, to examine program retention rates, and to ensure that the backgrounds of students included in analysis groups have been representative. Of those in immersion Kindergarten in 1971 and who remained in the Ottawa-Carleton area, about two-thirds were still in a program emphasizing French by Grade 8. Close to 70 per cent of the EFI group and over half of the LFI students appear to be continuing into a bilingual program at the Grade 9 level. In 1982 questionnaires were sent to two groups of former LFI students who had graduated from Grade 12 in a bilingual high school program. At least 80 per cent of the students were taking or planning to take a postsecondary program, and most felt fairly confident in their ability to use French. About two-thirds described experiences since leaving school which had given them opportunities to use and improve their French.

We hope that we will be able to monitor the progress of the EFI students until several cohorts have completed Grade 12 and to continue the follow-up of graduates. It will also be important to continue to examine the progress of children in the earlier grades and to study, in particular, ways of helping those who have problems, both those who transfer out of immersion and those who remain. Additional projects, some with a more theoretical emphasis, can continue to stimulate program developers to provide the best conditions possible for learning French as a second language in the special environment in the Ottawa-Carleton area.

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Learning Disabilities and Prediction of Success in Primary French Immersion

Ronald L. Trites

This paper summarizes the results of seven years of research. Two years were devoted to an investigation of the characteristics of children who have learning difficulties in Primary French-immersion programs. Five years were devoted to the development of a battery of tests intended to identify four-year-old children, prior to their entry into a Primary French-immersion program, who in subsequent years will do well in such a program, will drop out because of learning difficulties, or will remain in the program but do poorly (Trites 1981).

I am indebted to Anne Price, who was my research assistant for the first five years of investigation, and greatly appreciative of the contractual research funding I have received from the Ontario Ministry of Education throughout.

Learning Disabilities in Primary French-Immersion Students

French-immersion programs began in Ottawa schools in 1969-70 with programs at the Kindergarten level. By 1973 increasing numbers of children were being referred to the Neuropsychology Laboratory of the Royal Ottawa Hospital for the learning difficulties they were having in the programs. In order to understand more about the nature of these difficulties, we began our research program in 1975 (Trites and Price 1976). The primary goal of the first research project was to determine if the children's learning difficulties were specific to their being educated in a second language or if, as had been suggested elsewhere, they were children with primary learning disabilities who would have difficulty in school even if educated in their native language.

Eight groups of children were selected, as outlined in table 1. There were thirty-two children in each group, and all 256 children shared one common trait, namely, they were having difficulty in school.

Table 1: Eight Groups of Children With Learning Disabilities

"Language" Groups	N	"Traditional" Reference Groups	N
French immersion	32	Primary reading-disability problems	32
Anglophones in Francophone schools	32	Hyperactive	32
Children of other ethnic backgrounds in Anglophone schools	32	Behaviour and personality problems	32
Francophones in Francophone schools	32	Minimal brain dysfunction	32

The children received extensive evaluations, consisting of tests of intelligence, language, perceptual ability, personality and behavioural development, motor and sensory functioning. Statistical analysis indicated that the French-immersion group was unique in many important respects, and in fact all eight groups had unique profiles, one from the other. The French-immersion children were characterized by having the highest IQ of all the groups, superior language and perceptual abilities, and normal personality functions. However, they performed the poorest of all eight groups on a very important test in neuropsychology, namely, the Tactual Performance Test. The Tactual Performance Test is a measure sensitive to the temporal lobe regions of the brain. The results of this test were considered as potentially important in explaining difficulties in French immersion, since the temporal lobes are important brain regions for auditory processing, language functioning, and memory function. Our first year of study established that children who have difficulty in Primary French-immersion programs do not have the more commonly recognized learning disabilities such as primary reading disabilities or dyslexia, perceptual-motor disorders, and other types of learning difficulty familiar to those who work with learning-disabled children, but rather have a unique learning difficulty specific to the early-second-language-immersion program.

In order to cross-validate the results of the first study, in 1976 we matched sixteen non-clinic referral French-immersion drop-out children with sixteen French-immersion children who were doing well (Trites and Price 1977). The children were carefully matched for age, socio-economic status, sex, and, very importantly, teacher. It is always possible that some children do poorly in a program because they have a poor teacher. Therefore, each successful child was matched with each drop-out child on the basis that they had had the same teacher in French-immersion Kindergarten. Once again, a most important difference between the success and drop-out groups was on the Tactual Performance Test. The thirty-two French-immersion children from the previous year's study were re-examined: those children who were below ages nine and ten at retest continued to have difficulty on the Tactual Performance Test, while those who were ten years of age and older no longer had difficulty. We intrepreted the results of both years of study plus the follow-up investigation to mean that children with evidence of a maturational lag in the temporal-lobe regions of the brain will have difficulty when placed at an early age in a French-immersion program.

Early-Identification Assessment Investigation

Once it was established that there was a unique pattern of deficits characteristic of children who have difficulty in Primary French-immersion programs, we designed a test battery intended to assess four-year-old children, prior to their entry into a program, in order to predict their success in it (Trites and Price 1978, 1979, 1980). We decided at the same time to compare the predictive validity of the early-identification assessment with predictions of success made by Junior Kindergarten teachers and Senior Kindergarten teachers and also to investigate characteristics of the home environment as predictors of success. In this investigation, then, we assessed information from home, school, and individual neuropsychological testing for effectiveness as predictors of success.

Fifty-one of the fifty-three elementary schools in the Ottawa Board of Education offering an English four-year-old Kindergarten agreed to participate in the study. Teacher-rating information and

biographical- and background-information questionnaires were distributed to the teachers and parents of the 1330 children in the fifty-one schools. Detailed responses were received from 97 per cent of the teachers and 76.5 per cent of the parents, an extremely high response rate.

Teachers tended to recommend French-immersion enrolment for children they considered to be above average in ability, social maturation, and motivation. Parents, probably understandably, used an entirely different set of guidelines. In opting for the program, they tended to emphasize "lifestyle" factors such as enhanced job opportunities and opportunity to learn Canada's other official language. Approximately 500 of the 1330 children were scheduled to enter Primary French-immersion programs. Comparison of the families of French-immersion children with those of English Kindergarten children indicated that the French-immersion children tended to be those who came from higher socio-economic levels, who came from families with more books in the home, who were read to more frequently at home, and who had parents who either had knowledge of French or were studying French.

We randomly selected 200 of the 500 children for long-term investigation. The 200 children received detailed individual and group testing involving tests of intelligence, language, academic achievement, personality, behaviour, and, of course, a modified version of the Tactual Performance Test designed for four-year-olds. As can be seen from table 2, the children tended to perform well on all measures. The average scores on the intelligence tests were in the bright-normal range, and language skills were commensurably well developed. For example, vocabulary development as measured by the Peabody was at the 6.2-year level, while the average age of the children at testing was 4.9 years. Readiness skills for reading, as measured by the Wide Range Achievement Test, were at the Grade 1 level, although the children were just completing four-year-old Kindergarten, and spelling and arithmetic readiness skills were at the mid-to-late five-year-old Kindergarten level. The children were reassessed at the end of five-year-old Kindergarten (their first year in immersion), Grade 1, and Grade 4 and are currently being reassessed at the end of Grade 5.

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations of the 200 Children on Selected Measures of the Early-Identification Assessment Battery

Variables			$\bar{X}$	SD
Age			4.9	0.3
WPPSI:	VIQ		118.3	12.4
	PIQ		115.8	12.0
	FSIQ		118.9	11.9
Peabody	MA		6.2	1.3
	IQ		114.0	14.3
Matrices	Raw		17.3	4.6
	Percentile		79.7	21.9
WRAT:	Grade:	Reading	1.05	0.4
		Spelling	0.51	0.4
		Arithmetic	0.80	0.4

As can be seen in table 3, there has been a gradual attrition of the 200 children in the French-immersion program to 159 at the end of five-year-old Kindergarten, 124 at the end of Grade 2, and 94 at the end of Grade 4, and preliminary results suggest 88 at the end of Grade 5. While there are, of course, a variety of reasons for this attrition rate (including moving from the Ottawa area, problems with busing, and other factors), using rigorous criteria, we have identified twenty-five children as having dropped out of the program as a result of pronounced learning difficulties. In addition, some children have remained in the program in spite of having considerable difficulty in keeping up with the rest of the class.

Table 3: Classroom Enrolment of the 200 Children From Junior Kindergarten Through Grade 4

4-Year-Old Kindergarten	5-Year-Old Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 4
-200 to be enrolled in French immersion	-159 in French immersion -17 in English Kindergarten -16 moved -9 misc.	-124 in French immersion -39 in English programs -31 moved -6 misc.	-94 in French immersion -37 in English programs -62 moved -7 misc.

The predictions of the Junior Kindergarten teachers were not accurate in predicting subsequent success or learning difficulties in the Primary French-immersion program. However, the Senior Kindergarten teachers (who had the children for a year in an immersion program) were able to predict subsequent success according to the follow-up status at the end of Grades 1 and 4.

The best predictor of all was the neuropsychological test battery. As can be seen from table 4, in a comparison of drop-outs with high

Table 4: Discriminate-Function Comparison of Drop-outs and High Achievers in French-Immersion on Four-Year-Old Kindergarten Variables

Actual Group	N	Predicted Group[a]			
		Drop-outs		High achievers	
		N	%	N	%
Drop-outs	17	17	100	0	0
High achievers	22	0	0	22	100

[a] Overall correct classification: 100 per cent

achievers in French immersion carefully matched for IQ, the early-identification test battery administered to children at four years of age was able to predict subsequent drop-out versus high achievement with 100 per cent accuracy. A prediction of drop-out versus ability to remain in French immersion in spite of difficulty gave an overall 87 per cent correct classification. Finally, the test battery was able to predict the relative level of success for those children who were able to remain in the French-immersion program. As can be seen from table 5, when predicting high achievement versus low achievement, the test battery was 87 per cent accurate, even controlling for IQ.

Table 5: Discriminate Function Comparison of High Achievers and Low Achievers in French Immersion on Four-Year-Old Kindergarten Variables

Actual Group	N	Predicted Group[a]			
		High achievers		Low achievers	
		N	%	N	%
High achievers	22	22	100	0	0
Low achievers	17	5	29.4	12	70.6

[a] Overall correct classification: 87.18 per cent

Thus, our investigation suggests that it seems realistic to expect that a three-to-four-hour group and individual test assessment at the end of four-year-old Kindergarten is highly effective in predicting (a) whether a child will be able to stay in a French-immersion program or will drop out because of learning difficulties, and (b) the relative level of success, at least through Grades 4 and 5, of children who remain in the program.

Long-Term Follow-up of Drop-outs From Early French Immersion

Work intended to obtain follow-up information on the thirty-two French-immersion drop-outs in the 1975 study and the sixteen drop-outs from the 1976 study is now under way. We have been able to locate and test thirty-one of the forty-eight subjects. These individuals are now in their mid-to-late teens. As would be predicted from our maturational-lag model and findings that the learning difficulty is specific to the second-language learning program, only one of the thirty-one students has required special education programming. Thirty have progressed normally in regular English programs through their elementary and high school years, and some are scheduled to attend university. One purpose for conducting this follow-up was to determine how many of the drop-outs from early immersion opted for a late-immersion program, and, if so, whether or not they were successful. The maturational-lag hypothesis from this research would suggest that these individuals would be successful if they were to enter a late-immersion program. However, and somewhat to our surprise, none of the early drop-outs opted for a late-immersion program. One primary reason for their not doing so was that they were concerned that they would not do well (in spite of the fact that most were A and B students in their current high school programs and some were even in enriched programs). The other even more frequent reason was that they had a very negative attitude towards the French-language programs. It would appear that the early experience of doing poorly and dropping out of the French-immersion program had a lasting effect on their attitudes towards the French language and French-language programs at school.

Our research has implications with respect to the education of young immigrant children whose language is something other than English (Trites 1983a, 1983b). A significant proportion of these children almost certainly have maturational lags of the type just described. These particular children are likely to be at a disadvantage if they are enrolled in an English-language program, even the specialized English-as-a-second-language classes in the early grades at school. It may be advisable for them to be educated first in their native language and then enrolled in an English-language program after age nine or ten.

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Commentary on the Presentations of Drs. Swain and Lapkin and Dr. Canale

Françoise Howard

Preamble

By the nature of our occupation, my colleagues and I who are involved in teacher preparation often feel that we are poised on the edge of two worlds. While we feel the pull of gravity from the "real" world at our feet, that is, the demands of the classroom where our admirable practitioners are toiling at establishing practices in accord with the didactic principles they were taught at teachers' colleges (and in some cases practices that we ourselves championed), we find ourselves mesmerized by the call of some siren out there who promises sweeter returns for our efforts. We read the literature of new research on the language-learning processes, and, although we try to nurture in our student teachers a respect for established tradition, at the same time we try to awaken in them a spirit of adventure that will make them searching, risk-taking individuals who will not succumb too soon to the comfortable routines of yesteryear. "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times...."

Introduction

As you may be aware, Professor Calvé and I were assigned to two workshops this morning. While my colleague attended those directed by Dr. Morrison and Dr. Trites, I went to those presented by Dr. Canale and Drs. Swain and Lapkin. In the following two commentaries we will try to communicate the reactions of our assembled delegates to each workshop as well as give our views on the findings of the research project in question. As well, we will attempt to point out directions for new Ministry of Education involvement and ministry-sponsored research of the pure, developmental, or speculative kind -- all this keeping in mind the present concerns of our confrères in the field of French as a second language and the urgent need for the reorganization of French programs as prescribed by the new ministry documents and circulars, in some cases due for implementation as early as 1984!

Part I

The Review and Evaluation Bulletin entitled Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing (Canale and Swain 1979) was a very timely document. Ever since Hymes boldly asserted that "there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless" (Hymes 1972, p. 278), linguists and educators in Europe and America have taken up the pen to praise the most desirable aim of second-language teaching: communicative competence. To some degree England, France, and the United States led the way in the 1970s. Indeed, programs and textbooks were designed to serve the new aim, especially in ESL. But when the Canale and Swain bulletin appeared, it quickly came to the fore as the Canadian version of the rationale, theoretical framework, and pedagogic interpretation, described in eminently readable prose, of the new aim. Appendix A of the Ontario Assessment Instrument Pool (OAIP), "A Domain Description for Core FSL: Communicative Skills", translated this framework into a set of guiding principles for a communicative approach; it is now recognized as the definitive link between the highly prioritized aim of communication as it is stated in the Ministry of Education curriculum guideline French, Core Programs, 1980 and the FSL school departments in Ontario.

As Dr. Canale explained this morning, the OAIP project was begun in the hope of counteracting the "trivialization of communicative skills", that is, the widely held assumption among teachers of French that communicative skills were learned by osmosis, as it were, via a grammatically oriented program.

Dr. Canale pointed out that one of the problems involved in communication teaching and testing is, of course, created by the dichotomy of time allotment versus realistic performance objectives: shall we tailor our objectives to time constraints, or shall we increase time allocations to meet our objectives?

Another problem resides in the question "How are communicative skills acquired?". In the pseudo-naturalistic climate of immersion classes? In the core program in the guise of "situational" techniques and activities? From actual instruction with the teacher firmly ensconced in the didactic role? At the moment there is no

solution for this problem, at least in the context of elementary and secondary school education. At best, Canale feels, we must be there to "assist the learner and co-operate with him/her", in other words, to nurture the learner along the way to communicative competence. There cannot be any dramatic overnight changes. The most grievous problem seems to be that the majority of current programs and textbooks, while giving lip-service to the development of communicative skills, do not really encompass the aim of communication as stated in the 1980 curriculum guidelines.

Reactions from the audience were along the following lines. Is the OAIP package suited to the evaluation of the basic-level entrant into secondary school (Grade 10)? In response, Dr. Canale stressed that the burden for the use or misuse of OAIP rests with the examiner who uses the test items. Yet, objected another speaker, these items were no doubt screened among students of the general level of secondary school. The researcher admitted this, reminding his audience, however, that these are, at most, exemplary items, models as it were, which might suggest alternative teaching approaches to those currently practised in the French classroom, formats for exercises, or formats for tests. The items are complementary to the present structures-oriented programs and textbooks and must not be regarded as a measure of student achievement, teacher competence, or program value.

At this point I must insert a small note of caution. Notwithstanding all good intentions, slips do occur. It seems that a few of the OAIP items contain slight language flaws. As the only French-speaking member of the subject advisory group for the OAIP now in circulation, I bear some of the responsibility. No matter how pressing the deadline may be, future OAIP items must be edited even more carefully.

Part II

The second workshop I attended this morning was Dr. Swain and Dr. Lapkin's report on the Bilingual Education Project. The samples chosen by this team of researchers were taken to be "as comparable as possible" with the English-instructed groups, members of which were

without serious emotional problems, not repeaters, and not of Francophone background.

Dr. Swain went over the various questions that the 1980 generation of parents and educators would likely have asked. Would any native-language deficit ensue? Was immediate, intensive, early language use a proper way of assuring eventual proficiency in the second language? Would normal cognitive development be at risk if the language of learning were not the familiar home language, to the point of possible cognitive confusion? Was early total immersion not for the child of superior intelligence? Would the child be robbed of some ethnic identity in the process? Dr. Swain and Dr. Lapkin's report answered reassuringly on all counts. (In my suggested directions for future research, I will touch on the questions that are now asked -- that is, in the 1980s -- on the subject of immersion French.)

The audience assembled for this workshop sought reassurance on the subject of possible English-language deficits, some of them expressing nagging doubts. At this point it was suggested (by audience and researchers) that there is a public misconception that English-language proficiency centres on correct spelling. (A titter went through the crowd!) The question then arose as to whether the early-total-immersion students were not indeed a "select" group, by dint of the supportive influence of highly motivated parents. Dr. Swain's response was that, far from being select groups, the early-total-immersion groups in fact constituted a much wider range than did the late-immersion, self-motivated entrants. Furthermore, it seems that it is not unusual for even "supportive" parents to entertain a certain hostility towards the French language, while at the same time insisting that their offspring learn French for future careers. According to the recently published booklet French Immersion: The Trial Balloon That Flew (Swain and Lapkin 1983), if immersion French is a success, it is largely the result of the comfortable adjustment of the young students and their obvious enjoyment of the educational experience.

With on-the-spot verification from Mr. Russ McGillivray, Program Director, Carleton Board of Education: as of September 1982 eight secondary schools in the jurisdiction of the Carleton Board were

offering follow-up bilingual courses, for as many as twelve credits, to those immersion students (60 per cent of them) who enter Grade 9 (this percentage was noted in the Morrison report). Incidentally, 50 per cent of the late-immersion entrants abandon the immersion program at the Grade 9 level (Morrison).

In summary, early-immersion students progress at the same rate in their mother tongue (after Grade 5) in their academic subjects as do their English-instructed peers, are more competent in French than core French students three to four grades ahead of them, and even compare favourably with their Francophone peers, at the Grade 8 level, in measures of receptive skills (listening comprehension, reading comprehension), but lag behind the latter group in French speaking proficiency.

Late-immersion programs, it appears, have not yet been thoroughly enough investigated to be fairly compared with early-immersion programs. Indeed, a good deal of the findings related to late immersion quoted in the Bilingual Education Project report (Swain and Lapkin 1981) are reported in the Quebec research, mainly by Genesee. The reasons given for insufficient analysis are the current diversity in late-immersion-program patterns in Ontario; the various degrees of intensity of second-language exposure; the different entry points; and the differences in the context (subject matter) through which the French language is taught. It must be remembered that context-rich subjects call for more language utilization by the learner. But which school subjects offer these most advantageous contexts? At which age level will they be introduced? How is the teacher chosen? This last point is my concern: Will the teacher be chosen on the basis of expediency, or will he/she have been trained for teaching academic subjects to second-language learners?

Part III

The next comments you hear will be the outcome of very pragmatic considerations. I fully recognize that budget restraints will not allow the support of research projects that fall short of the mark in terms of realistic applications. There is, however, one aspect on which I would like to make an idealist's statement. Intuitively I

believe that benefits of a personal and social nature will accrue to the Canadian student from the bilingual experience. Heightened linguistic awareness, I feel, opens one's mind to the understanding of the other founding race. Not that this understanding will result in the approval of divergent philosophies or the total acceptance of each other's cultural traditions -- but no matter! Heightened linguistic awareness in this country may become our only assurance that "the centre will hold".

And now quickly back to pragmatism, for never have we been more aware of the importance of our role as educators in assuring the holding power of our French programs. To this end it is time to look forward critically and sensibly to directions for action and future research.

First, I would like to consider with you the question of levels of French and the realistic expectations they represent. In a document called Teaching and Learning French as a Second Language (Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1977), the ministry stated its expectations of FSL instruction in terms of proficiency (basic, middle, and top) based on a specific number of hours for each level (1200, 2100, and 5000). It has now been found that there is no direct relationship between the number of accumulated hours of second-language instruction and proficiency in that language, this relationship being "affected by the age of the learner, the intensity of the second language instruction, and the instructional strategies and materials used by the teacher" (Swain 1981). Therefore, it is now possible to suggest revisions in order to make these expectations more realistic and begin to refine them into more specific statements.

My next remarks deal with the core French program -- the poor relative! According to the 1980 statistical table issued by the ministry, there are still some twenty boards of education in Ontario that do not provide any instruction in French in their elementary schools (Ministry of Education, 1982, appendix B, table 4.1, p. 55). There are only fifty-one boards of 130 surveyed in 1982 "in which grade 13 students will accumulate 1200 hours of core French instruction for the SSHGD". Of the 130 boards surveyed, seventy-eight propose to provide this amount of instruction by 1995. Yet the core French

program is the choice of some 44 per cent of our students at the elementary level and probably of a good number of the 32.8 per cent of students enrolled in FSL from Grade 9 to 13 in 1980 (Ministry of Education, 1982, appendix B, table 1, p. 49). Clearly, the Ministry of Education, in its judicial role, must look into the situation and offer wise direction for the future, especially as it is now proven (Morrison report) that, where core programs are concerned, proficiency in the French language is in direct relationship to "overall exposure" (read "time allocation") to French instruction.

Next I will deal with immersion programs. More and more, parents are choosing for their children the immersion-program way to the attainment of a degree of bilingualism. Early-total-immersion French, one of several options, is particularly popular.

Since research findings cast some doubt on the advisability of this option for certain children (based on the current teacher/parent criteria of high IQ, social maturity, and motivation), should parents who contemplate enrolling their children in early total immersion be invited to look at the more positive predictive measures present in a diagnostic test of adjustment and successful continuance in such a program (along the lines of Dr. Trites's battery of tests), this test to be administered through local school boards in conjunction with psychologists? I am told by Dr. Trites that an article on the nature and administrative procedures of these tests is forthcoming (Canadian Modern Language Review) and that such tests do not represent undue inconvenience to all concerned.

Meanwhile, and notwithstanding the excellent groundwork done by Dr. Trites, there is good reason to keep abreast of the research literature on such language-learning processes as that of the young child (aged two to five) who, in a "submersion" situation in his/her own family or immediate social environment, proceeds along the way to bilingualism (see Tritone, 1983).

The establishment of immersion programs is the decision of a school board (usually under parental pressure), yet the public at large and, very often, the parents themselves are poorly informed on the

important question of the different practices that have been called "immersion." What is immersion? What happens inside an immersion-program classroom? Where does the emphasis really lie -- on the context, that is, the subject matter, or primarily on the medium, that is, the pursuit of linguistic excellence in French?

Perhaps it is time for the Ministry of Education to state, more prescriptively than it has done in the past, the role of those priorities to be established within the various patterns of French-immersion programs. Such guidelines would delineate the present teacher's role and the nature of his/her teaching procedures, make for a wiser choice of teaching materials, and be of invaluable assistance in the professional training of the prospective French teacher.

Instances have been reported where the performance of late-immersion students was found to be superior to that of early-immersion students (Swain, Lapkin, and Andrew 1981). Late immersion may be a viable, practical, effective way to proceed. Are older learners, being more cognitively mature, more efficient than younger ones in some aspects of second-language learning? Genesee (1978) con[illegible]s that older learners' ability to abstract, classify, and generalize may aid them in the task of consciously formulating and applying second-language rules. Older learners, having learned to read and write, need only learn "different surface realizations of these skills" as demanded by the second language.

According to Cummins's (1979) "threshold" hypothesis, called the developmental interdependence hypothesis, the development of competence in the second language is partially a function of the type of competence already developed in the first language at the time when intensive exposure to the second language begins. The threshold-level hypothesis proposes that there may be threshold levels of linguistic competence which a bilingual child must attain in order to receive the cognitive benefits of bilingualism. Perhaps this hypothesis should be further investigated with a view to forecasting success in late immersion.

Early total immersion appears to yield a more proficient end product, in terms of "near-native" competence, than does late immersion. Perhaps it is time to test the ultimate attainment in French-language proficiency of both types of students at the moment of leaving school, that is, at the Grade 13 level of their bilingual secondary school program.

The following suggestions will deal with ministry-sponsored services. When asked to retrospectively analyze their school careers, students of the bilingual high school programs regretted their lack of interaction with French-speaking peers (both the Morrison and Swain-Lapkin reports). Also, students in the core program often lack a linguistic and cultural experience in a naturalistic setting. Under the heading "Student Exchange and Enrichment Opportunities" the FSL Programs in Ontario bulletin (Ministry of Education, 1982) describes ministry-sponsored offerings. Wherever else budgetary stringencies operate, let it not be at the expense of support to the student, our long-term investment par excellence. Let us hope that "Student Exchange and Enrichment Opportunities" will continue to be forthcoming -- and be well publicized in the schools.

My next suggestions will deal with materials production. Those students who were formerly in programs designated as "four-year" were often poorly served by inadequate patchwork programs, frequently based on obsolete textbooks and inadequate materials, or watered-down versions of programs for the more advanced streams. It now becomes urgent that we attend to the basic-level programs for core French students. To that end, the ministry's Learning Materials Development Plan should give priority to the development of materials for these programs.

On the topic of materials production also, classroom teachers are now searching their textbooks for exercises and activities suitable for skill-getting and skill-using in the new context of communicative teaching. It would seem opportune to promote and sponsor the production of such materials, at least until new textbooks are designed or

old ones retailored to meet the aim of the 1980 ministry guideline. In the same vein, collections of suitable authentic materials (media reports, tapes, etc.) should be encouraged for use in communicative teaching.

Next I will deal with pure research. Current studies in error analysis and levels of interlanguage are not always relevant to the needs of co-ordinators and classroom teachers in core French and immersion programs, especially at the elementary level of French instruction. The sponsorship of relevant research projects over the next five years would be invaluable for the predicting of errors and the handling of corrective measures as our young Anglophone students proceed towards a native-like linguistic performance.

With regard to experimental research, although OAIP is now well in place, there is a definite dearth of assessment instruments suitable for the testing of integrative language performance at the senior secondary school level. The ministry might consider, as a project, a sequel to OAIP, oriented to school-leaving students at the general level (whose French-language instruction has probably reached an end) before they enter the marketplace.

The following observations will deal with teacher preparation. The new policy of French-for-everyone entails diversified teaching approaches: basic, general, and advanced levels; core, extended, immersion, and secondary school bilingual programs. Faculties of education must address these demands that are being made by school boards. Candidates to the concentration French (pre-service) and to the FSL 1 and 2 certificates must come to their professional year(s) with a proficiency in French that allows them flexibility of operation in the (aggressive!) hiring market. The implication that university credits alone assure readiness for a teaching career is a false one. It is becoming urgent that an admission test be recognized and accepted for the assessment of the linguistic competence of the candidate. It would be more satisfactory if such a test were provincially oriented, albeit administered by each faculty of education to each candidate entering FSL 1 and 2.

Because the teaching duties of the future second-language teacher, especially in core French programs, would be greatly alleviated by the presence of monitors, the training sessions of these monitors might now require a more organized, more formal, and more in-depth preparation. Such courses could be mounted at faculties of education, with the assistance of experienced ministry personnel. The qualifications for monitoring should not preclude the older, non-teaching native speakers from the community with verified language skills.

Similarly, the coming need for assessing communication skills in French at the secondary school level calls for interviewers properly trained for duties that resemble those of psychometricians (see Savignon and Clark on testing communicative skills). Under the guidance of the ministry, and possibly with input from outside agencies, such personnel might be identified by board administrators and trained (short courses, workshops) for these new school-wide assessment sessions.

Without further adieu, I suggest we now hear from my confrère, Professor Calvé.

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Commentary on the Presentations of Dr. Morrison and Dr. Trites

Pierre Calvé

I would first like to congratulate the researchers. I was very impressed by the thoroughness of their work and their great care in concluding only from what their evidence gave them. It must have been very tempting, at times, to generalize from their findings much more than they did. Much credit must also be given to the Ministry of Education for promoting these studies.

I have attended Dr. Morrison's and Dr. Trites's presentations and I will address part of my remarks specifically to their projects. However, since all of you have attended their sessions, and since their reports speak clearly for themselves, I will not merely repeat their conclusions; rather, I will concentrate on some of the questions that still arise from the research and make suggestions as to the areas that, in my opinion, should attract further attention.

At the outset, the main questions asked by the ministry were the following:

1. Does immersion offer a viable alternative to core programs in terms of:
   - cognitive and affective effects on children's development,
   - effects on students' mother tongue,
   - effects on general academic performance,
   - success in acquiring the language?

2. Can all children go through an immersion program?

3. How does late immersion compare with early immersion and how does partial immersion compare with total immersion in terms of efficiency?

4. How does immersion compare with extended-core and with core programs in terms of students' achievement?

5. How successful are core programs in teaching the language, and how can we improve these programs?

From the reports that were presented today, we can draw the following general conclusions:

1. Immersion students do learn to communicate in French. Their listening and reading skills are, as should be expected, better than their speaking and writing skills. How well they communicate and how often they use the language outside the classroom is, however, another set of questions.

2. Immersion does not seem to have detrimental effects on the affective and cognitive development of children or on the other school subjects, including English.

3. Time at task, rather than age, seems to be a determining factor in successful acquisition of the language. It seems, however, that early-total-immersion students acquire a more "native-like" accent than late-immersion students.

4. Students in immersion programs are brighter than average, are more motivated, and belong to a higher socio-economic group. This conclusion has been questioned for Ottawa-Carleton, where close to 50 per cent of the early student population is in immersion. However, according to Dr. Trites, the students he tested in Ottawa-Carleton were, for the most part, from the "elite" group. Also, one of Dr. Morrison's studies shows that the vast majority of the Grade 12 students she tested in bilingual programs (and who were formerly in immersion programs) plan to go to university, a fact that gives some support to the elitist theory concerning immersion.

As far as the efficiency of the different programs is concerned, it is very difficult to provide categorical answers, since most results are in relative terms: X did better than Y and as well as Z, or X

obtained better results on a proficiency test after N hours of instruction. Thus, we cannot really tell what the students can actually do in the language, what tasks they could accomplish properly.

Likewise, it is difficult, from Dr. Morrison's studies, to see if early immersion is really more efficient than late immersion, since her two groups did not have the same amount of time at task.

Also, as Dr. Morrison pointed out, a later, more intensive core program seems to give better results than a "thinner" program spread over a longer period. However, here again it is hard to draw a clear conclusion, since in the later, more intensive program, subject-matter teaching was also included.

In the same vein, it would be very interesting to know if, for instance, in immersion it is really the language's being taught in a "functional" setting that gives it the advantage over the core programs, or if it is not rather the thousands of hours of exposure to the language that makes the difference (plus the higher IQs, the greater motivation). Can we really say that "immersion is acquisition" and "core is learning" and conclude from there that only immersion can be successful (if we accept Krashen's hypothesis concerning acquisition vs. learning)? From Dr. Morrison's studies, it seems that time is really a major (if not the major) variable in learning a language. In any case, it is probably only in the context of immersion or extended-core programs that students can log enough hours of French instruction to attain a "working" knowledge of the language. Still, I believe that core programs are viable, and, at the end of this presentation, I will offer some suggestions as to how to improve their efficiency.

Before that, however, I would like to say a few words about Dr. Trites's presentation. His research consisted of studying learning disabilities and predicting success in Primary French immersion. The main point that emerged from his presentation was that it is possible, with the help of a "predictor-of-success test battery", to find with very good accuracy those children who, because of a specific type of maturational lag, should not go into immersion programs before the age of nine or ten. Through early identification of these children (who are otherwise perfectly "normal"), we can avoid what would become for

them a frustrating experience and the ensuing negative attitude towards learning French. In my opinion, this battery of tests, which Dr. Trites says can easily and at low cost be made available to school boards, should become, if further validated, standard procedure in pretesting early-immersion candidates. According to the author, these tests are much more dependable than parents' and teachers' opinions as predictors of success, although he admits that, after having known a class for one year in K-4, a teacher can predict with relative accuracy which children should further succeed in the program.

Dr. Trites further pointed out that children who dropped out of early immersion because of this maturational lag should do well in late immersion, but that this hypothesis has not been tested. He also mentioned that most kids he tested were well above average in intelligence and socio-economic standing, that children in immersion classes tend to be poor spellers (in both French and English), although the drop-outs from immersion do as well as others in English, and that more research is needed to find out what happens to those students whose maturational lag does not resolve itself after age nine or ten.

In the rest of my presentation I would like to raise some of the questions which I feel are in urgent need of attention, first in immersion and then in core programs.

Up to now, the research accomplished on immersion has gone to a considerable depth but in a relatively narrow range of factors. In the history of core programs, most of the researchers' attention has been aimed at the structure of language and at teaching methodology. In the short history of immersion, it is the student who has been the focus of attention, a situation which is perfectly understandable, considering the risks involved in such a venture. It is now time, however, to turn to the other variables involved in this type of program, where much pedagogical and administrative catching-up has to be done. Here are some of the questions:

- How is an immersion program put together? What are its distinctive features in terms of organization and content? None of

the research reports mentions what is actually going on in immersion schools and classes, except that French is the language of instruction.

- How do we train teachers for immersion? Should future teachers of immersion classes follow a distinct program?

- What methodology is most efficient for subject-matter teaching in immersion classes? What should be taught in the French class in immersion schools?

- What linguistic competence should be expected at the end of each school year and for each of the four skills in immersion programs? Are we aiming for the minimal communicative skill in speech and writing, or should we expect the students to have near-native-like proficiency in terms of stylistic, orthographic, and rhetorical skills?

- What is the intrinsic educational value of immersion? Are we aiming strictly at a practical knowledge of the language? What about knowledge about the language and the culture? What system of values should accompany such a program? How can we encourage and promote more contacts between immersion students and French native speakers? Will we end up, in Canada, with the same two solitudes, with the only difference being that they will be bilingual?

- Who should have access to immersion in Ontario? All and only those who want it?

- What happens to former immersion students once they reach the university, the job market? What use do they make of their second language? Do they feel competent to use it? What kind of contacts, of professional relationships, do they entertain with the French population? What are their attitudes towards their former education, towards the culture?

Most of these questions reflect an urgent need for ministerial guidelines in terms of objectives, content, and strategies for immersion programs. Up to now these have been left to individual school boards, and even individual schools. The same goes for teaching materials, which, although excellent in many cases, vary widely from one school board to another. Finally, to avoid further reinventing of the wheel from one province to the other, it would seem appropriate to establish better interprovincial collaboration in developing those guidelines and, of course, in determining the research priorities.

I would now like to say a few words about core programs where, in contrast to immersion where French is learned more or less incidentally, we are still facing the question "How can we teach a second language?".

First, I would like to make a mise en garde about too fast a jump onto the communicative bandwagon. In their excellent document Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing, Canale and Swain (1979) suggest that we move from a grammatical to a communicative syllabus. Their theoretical justification is sound. But where are the data on which to build such a syllabus? Much of what has been done in the development of notional-functional materials has been aimed at adult populations with well-defined needs and uses for the second language. What are the communicative needs in French of a student in Thunder Bay? But, more importantly, where can we find this communicative grammar? It takes much more than a few examples of discourse strategies and sociolinguistic rules to replace a grammatical progression in the establishment of a ten-year program.

We must also keep in mind the preparation of teachers for such programs. Many are just getting used to the oral approach, to using grammar as a tool rather than as a goal in itself, to seeing language as something else than a body of knowledge. Telling them that a grammatically based curriculum (not to be confused with a course on grammar) is no longer appropriate and offering them no alternative programs may only add to the confusion.

For the moment, I would suggest that we develop ways to graft onto the existing curriculum a communicative component consisting mostly of classroom activities where the conditions for communication are present and where we exploit the students' interests rather than their presumed needs for the second language. Concrete suggestions are offered below. In the meantime, research should concentrate on finding ways of reconciling a grammatical and a communicative progression, and in producing data on which a complete new program can be based.

In the short term, how can we improve the core programs, assuming as we must that such programs are here to stay and that they should not be considered as the poor relatives of French education? My first suggestion would be that, wherever possible, we teach another subject than French in French. This is the best communicative experience that students can get within the school itself. Krashen's experience at the University of Ottawa was very convincing in that respect.

Another priority is teacher training. I am convinced that the efficiency of core programs can be immensely improved if teachers are better prepared. What is actually going on in many French classes is surprisingly close to what has long been associated with "traditional" approaches (Calvé 1983).

The improvement of teaching materials should also be given priority. Too often, French programs have been defined in terms of the available commercial methods rather than in terms of pre-established guidelines. Still, much can be done to improve the existing material by the introduction of new techniques based on recently developed approaches like total physical response, silent way, natural approach, humanistic approach. The systematic use of games in the FSL class can also help in artificially creating the conditions for real communication and in improving considerably the students' interest and motivation. The question "What do students like to do in French?" can thus replace the question "What are the students' actual needs for French?".

Research should also concentrate on finding out the vocabulary themes and the type of authentic materials that would be of interest to different groups of students.

The total number of hours devoted to French in the core programs should be increased to at least 1200 hours, as suggested in the Gillin report.

Finally, the efficiency of basic, simple classroom management could be vastly improved. It is appalling to see how much time is lost in non-productive activities in a great number of classes. How can a student learn to speak when he/she is allowed twenty seconds per forty-minute period (an average based on my own observation), saying things he/she does not really want to say to someone who already knows exactly what he/she is going to say? Simple individualization techniques, team work, etc., can easily be implemented to make core classes much more effective. Increasing the total number of hours in core French will serve little if we do not make better use of that time.

Considerable time, effort, and money have been spent, and well spent, on studying experimentally the affective and cognitive aspects of immersion programs. It is now time to apply the same rigorous approach to the study of the administrative and pedagogical factors involved, not only in immersion, but also in extended and core programs.

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